

slaughtered ; so that each owner must determine which shall be killed and which preserved for breeding. In every district, as Youatt has remarked, there is a prejudice in favour of the native breed ; so that animals possessing qualities, whatever they may be, which are most valued in each district, will be oftenest preserved ; and this unmethodical selection assuredly will in the long run affect the character of the whole breed. But it may be asked, can this rude kind of selection have been practised by barbarians such as those of southern Africa ? In a future chapter on Selection we shall see that this has certainly occurred to some extent. Therefore, looking to the origin of the many breeds of cattle which formerly inhabited the several districts of Britain, I conclude that, although slight differences in the nature of the climate, food, &c., as well as changed habits of life, aided by correlation of growth, and the occasional appearance from unknown causes of considerable deviations of structure, have all probably played their parts ; yet that the occasional preservation in each district of those individual animals which were most valued by each owner has perhaps been even more effective in the production of the several British breeds. As soon as two or more breeds were formed in any district, or when new breeds descended from distinct species were introduced, their crossing, especially if aided by some selection, will have multiplied the number and modified the characters of the older breeds.

SHEEP.

I SHALL treat this subject briefly. Most authors look at our domestic sheep as descended from several distinct species. Mr. Blyth, who has carefully attended to the subject, believes that fourteen wild species now exist, but "that not one of them can be identified as the progenitor of any one of the interminable domestic races." M. Gervais thinks that there are six species of *Ovis*,⁷³ but that our domestic sheep form a distinct genus, now completely extinct. A German

⁷³ Blyth, on the genus *Ovis*, in 'Annals and Mag. of Nat. History,' vol. vii., 1841, p. 261. With respect to the parentage of the breeds, see

Mr. Blyth's excellent articles in 'Land and Water,' 1867, pp. 134, 156. Gervais, 'Hist. Nat. des Mammifères,' 1855, tom. ii. p. 191.